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## READINGS BOOKLET



# GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

English 33

Part B: Reading

June 1992

**Alberta**  
EDUCATION

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**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION  
ENGLISH 33**

**Part B: Reading**

**READINGS BOOKLET**

**DESCRIPTION**

*Part B: Reading* contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are eight reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Total time allotted: 2 hours

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- Be sure that you have an English 33 Readings Booklet and an English 33 Questions Booklet.
- You may **NOT** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

**JUNE 1992**



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I. Questions 1 to 6 in your Questions Booklet are based on this essay.

### THE FIREWOOD GATHERERS

This excerpt is from *Glimpses of the Barren Land*, which was published in 1930.

*Thierry Mallet joined a French fur company as an apprentice trader, and went on to establish and oversee a large group of trading posts in the barren lands of the Canadian arctic. His intimate knowledge of the land and of the people led him to write about his observations.*

Our camp had been pitched at the foot of a great, bleak, ragged hill, a few feet from the swirling waters of the Kazan River. The two small green tents, pegged down tight with heavy rocks, shivered and rippled under the faint touch of the northern breeze. A thin wisp of smoke rose from the embers of the fire.

5 Eleven o'clock, and the sun had just set under a threatening bank of clouds far away to the northwest. It was the last day of June and daylight still. But the whole country seemed bathed in gray, boulders, moss, sand, even the few willow shrubs scattered far apart in the hollows of the hills. Half a mile away, upstream, the caribou-skin topeks of an Inuit settlement, fading away amid the background,  
10 were hardly visible to the eye.

Three small gray specks could be seen moving slowly above our camp. Human shapes, but so puny, so insignificant-looking against the wild rocky side of that immense hill! Bending down, then straightening up, they seemed to totter aimlessly through the chaos of stone, searching for some hidden treasure.

15 Curiosity, or perhaps a touch of loneliness, suddenly moved me to leave camp and join those three forlorn figures so far away above me near the sky line.

Slowly I made my way along the steep incline, following at first the bed of a dried-up stream. Little by little the river sank beneath me, while the breeze, increasing in strength, whistled past, lashing and stinging my face and hands. I  
20 had lost sight momentarily of the three diminutive figures which had lured me on to these heights. After a while a caribou trail enabled me to leave the coulee and led me again in the right direction, through a gigantic mass of granite which the frost of thousands of years had plucked from the summit of the hill and hurled hundreds of feet below.

25 At last I was able to reach the other side of the avalanche of rocks and suddenly emerged comparatively in the open, on the brim of a slight depression at the bottom of which a few dead willow bushes showed their bleached branches above the stones and the gray moss. There I found the three silent figures huddled close together, gathering, one by one, the twigs of the precious wood. Two little  
30 girls, nine or ten years old, so small, so helpless, and an aged woman, so old, so frail, that my first thought was to marvel at the idea of their being able to climb so far from their camp to that lonely spot.

An Inuit great-grandmother and her two great-granddaughters, all three contributing their share to the support of the tribe. Intent on their work, or most  
35 probably too shy to look up at the strange white man whom, until then, they had only seen at a distance, they gave me full opportunity to watch them.

*Continued*



All were dressed alike, in boots, trousers, and coats of caribou skin. The children wore little round leather caps reaching far over their ears, the crown decorated with beadwork designs. One of them carried on the wrist, as a bracelet,  
40 a narrow strip of bright red flannel. Their faces were round and healthy, the skin sunburned to a dark copper color, but their cheeks showed a tinge of blood which gave them, under the tan, a peculiar complexion like the color of a ripe plum. Their little hands were bare and black, the scratches caused by the dead twigs showing plainly in white, while their fingers seemed cramped with the cold.

45 The old woman was bareheaded, quite bald at the top of the head, with long wisps of gray hair waving in the wind. The skin of her neck and face had turned black, dried up like an old piece of parchment. Her cheeks were sunken and her cheek bones protruded horribly. Her open mouth showed bare gums, for her teeth were all gone, and her throat, thin and bare as a vulture's neck, showed the  
50 muscles like cords. Her hands were as thin as the hands of a skeleton, the tip of each finger curved in like a claw. Her eyes, once black, now light gray, remained half closed, deep down in their sockets.

She was stone blind.

Squatting on her heels, she held, spread in front of her, a small caribou skin.  
55 As soon as the children dropped a branch beside her, she felt for it gropingly; then, her hands closing on it greedily, like talons, she would break it into small pieces, a few inches long, which she carefully placed on the mat at her feet.

Both little girls, while searching diligently through the clumps of dead willows for what they could break off and carry away, kept absolutely silent. Not only  
60 did they never call to one another when one of them needed help, but they seemed to watch each other intently whenever they could. Now and then, one of them would hit the ground two or three times with the flat of her hand. If the other had her head turned away at the time, she appeared to be startled and always wheeled round to look. Then both children would make funny little motions with  
65 their hands at one another.

The little girls were deaf.

After a while they had gathered all the wood the caribou skin could contain. Then the children went up to the old woman and conveyed to her the idea that it was time to go home. One of them took her hands in hers and guided them to  
70 two corners of the mat, while the other tapped her gently on the shoulder.

The old, old woman understood. Slowly and carefully she tied up the four corners of the caribou skin over the twigs, silently watched by the little girls. Groaning, she rose to her feet, tottering with weakness and old age, and with a great effort swung the small bundle over her back. Then one little girl took her  
75 by the hand, while the other, standing behind, grasped the tail of her caribou coat. Slowly, very slowly, step by step they went their way, following a caribou trail around rocks, over stones, down, down the hill, straight toward their camp, the old woman carrying painfully for the young, the deaf leading and steering safely the blind.

*Thierry Mallet*  
Canadian writer

II. Questions 7 to 17 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

- Cautiously, hoping that nobody sees,  
I stop my hired car outside your house.  
You are not there, but far away  
in California putting your children to bed —  
5 Nor have I seen you once in fifteen years.  
It's past eleven: your mother's floating by  
A window in a purple robe, your father's  
reading a book. They have both been sick.  
Like all their friends, they've had their  
10 operations, retired from their jobs, and begun,  
To their annoyance, talking — like any poet —  
of the past.
- What if we had married? The notion seems  
outrageously absurd, and yet, before our lives  
15 Began in earnest, that, as I recall, was once  
indeed the plan. For years, I preferred your  
House to mine, your parents to my own. . . .  
And then I loathed them, thought these shadows  
At the window pane were guilty of offenses  
20 intellectual and moral, that they drove you  
Crazy to extremes of anarchy and lust through  
their chaste example and their discipline when  
All the virginal austerity<sup>1</sup> was mine.
- What I want to do, you see, is to leap from  
25 the car, pound on the door, and say:  
Forgive me! as they stand there staring in the  
autumn night. . . . (Perhaps we'd spend  
An hour drinking brandy then, and tell long tales,  
and show each other photographs,  
30 And shake hands solemnly at twelve. . . .) But  
of course I don't do anything like  
That at all. I start the car and drive on East  
as far as Philadelphia.

*John Matthias*  
Contemporary American writer

<sup>1</sup>virginal austerity — moral strictness



III. Questions 18 to 29 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *The Kite*.

from THE KITE

CHARACTERS:

DADDY SHERRY — *It is spring, 1976.* Daddy is the oldest man in the world. Two weeks from Thursday, if the sap rising within him does not split the bark, he will be one hundred and seventeen years old.

KEITH MACLEAN — Keith is Daddy's great-great-great-grandson, who will be twelve years old his next birthday.

HELEN MACLEAN — Keith's mother teaches and keeps Keith, Daddy, and forty elementary-school children in line. She is in her early thirties and a widow.

DR. DAVID RICHARDSON — He is a family physician in his early forties. Keith suspects that the doctor is romantically interested in his mother.

DR. RICHARDSON *has just arrived at the MACLEAN house to give DADDY SHERRY a checkup.*

DOCTOR: Hey there, Keith, I see you're getting up in the world.

KEITH: Umm. (*Now hanging by his knees, and not friendly at all.*) Dr. Richardson.

DOCTOR: All set to do your death-defying triple somersault through thin air? (*Waits for KEITH's response.*) Double somersault? (*Waits again.*) Single?

5 KEITH: She's in the house.

DOCTOR: Hmm?

KEITH: My mother.

DOCTOR: Oh. (*Now he senses KEITH's hostility.*) Well, I came to give Daddy a checkup.

10 KEITH: She's dressin' 'im. (*Shrugs. He begins to swing the trapeze. The DOCTOR stands hesitant as he looks up at KEITH.*)

DOCTOR: Something bothering you?

KEITH: Nope. (*Continues to swing.*)

DOCTOR: Anything I can . . .

15 KEITH: Nope.

DOCTOR: You sure?

KEITH: Yep.

DOCTOR (*Turns away towards the door and then back again*): Look, Keith, if something is bothering you, maybe there is something I can do.

20 KEITH: Nope. (*He falls backwards and hangs by his hands.*)

DOCTOR (*Moves up and stands under the hanging boy*): Come on down — let's talk it over. (*KEITH lifts up his legs and brings them through his arms in a skin-the-cat and hangs there.*)

DOCTOR: I thought we were friends — you and I — (*Pause.*) and your mother.

25 KEITH (*Suddenly explodes, bringing his legs through his arms and kicking out to finish the skin-the-cat. He darn near gets the DOCTOR, who has to jump back to get out of the way. KEITH hooks one knee over the bar and goes up to sit on it*): She's probably got him dressed for you now. You can go in there and do your examination now (*Pause.*) on him.

*Continued*



30 **DOCTOR:** Yes I could. *(Pause.)* After you tell me what I have done that seems to have upset you. *(Pause.)* After you come down off that bar. *(Pause.)* Will you?

**KEITH:** Will I what?

35 *(It has now reached an impasse<sup>1</sup> between them. KEITH probably now wishes he had not come on so strong, but at the same time there is no way he can backtrack and he doesn't know quite how to go ahead. He puts his arms wider on the bar and goes backwards and into another skin-the-cat. He hangs for a moment, then does the dislocate — first one shoulder and then the other. This is not difficult with the hands wide on the bar and is quite dramatic.)*

40 **DOCTOR:** Hey, that's really something.

**KEITH:** It's called skin-the-cat.

**DOCTOR** *(He goes to KEITH and takes him by the hips and lifts him so that he can get his shoulders back into place, then go up and through and drop to the ground):* Good thing you had a doctor handy, boy.

45 **KEITH:** Yeah.

**DOCTOR:** Now, what's eating you, Keith?

**KEITH:** Er, nothin'. *(He is glad to be out of it.)* Daddy kinda got under my hide.

50 **DOCTOR:** He's good at that.

**KEITH:** Yeah, I'm sorry.

**DOCTOR:** That's all right.

**KEITH:** What are you getting Daddy for his birthday?

**DOCTOR:** Mmmmmh — box of cigars . . . .

55 **KEITH:** Oh.

**DOCTOR:** You see — I know him mainly — professionally — not as close to him as you — your mother . . . I thought a box of House of Senate cigars would be about my speed.

60 **KEITH** *(They are both sitting on the porch step now):* Mmmh. Not too hard for you.

**DOCTOR:** What do you mean?

**KEITH:** Like you said, being closer to a person — it's tougher — got to be more careful.

**DOCTOR:** That's right.

65 **KEITH:** You — I was wondering if maybe you had any ideas — for me.

**DOCTOR:** I don't know, Keith.

**KEITH:** Must be lots of things he might like.

**DOCTOR:** Mmmh.

**KEITH:** But — with him — lots of things he *wouldn't* like.

70 **DOCTOR:** The main thing, Keith — you're fond of Daddy — you're close to him — when you know a person well it shouldn't be so hard to think of a present for him — should it?

**KEITH:** Easy for you to say.

**DOCTOR:** But it's right.

75 **KEITH:** I got a dollar twenty cents saved up — be *two* dollars twenty cents if I ever get the windows done.

**DOCTOR:** One thing that might help you.

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>*impasse* — deadlock

KEITH: Yeah?

80 DOCTOR: I have a feeling he would get more pleasure out of something you made yourself than something you *bought* with your — two dollars — twenty cents.

KEITH: Oh! (*Considers it.*) Why?

DOCTOR: He would.

85 KEITH: Anything a kid like me would make — it'd be a hay-wire, shaganappi thing.

DOCTOR: That isn't the point, Keith. Anything you bought would be something *anybody* — with two dollars and — twenty cents — could walk into a store and buy. If you made it yourself — then Daddy would know that you had — that it took you time to make it — and care. . . .

90 KEITH: Uh-huh.

DOCTOR: All the time you were whittling or gluing or sand-papering or hammering . . . .

KEITH: Gluin' or sand-paperin' what?

DOCTOR: Whatever you made up your mind — whatever you thought he'd like.

95 KEITH: Oh.

DOCTOR: Some of your own time would be wrapped up — in your present to him.

KEITH: Uh-huh.

DOCTOR: Does that help you — any?

100 KEITH (*Shakes his head*): Well — maybe — I guess I ought to make it — only — I still don't know *what* to make and it's harder to figure out a present to *make* for a person than it is to figure out a present to *buy* for a person.

DOCTOR: Guess it is.

105 KEITH: Bein' Daddy — makes it twice as hard — may be the last chance I get — to give him a birthday present.

DOCTOR: Ohhhh. (*He has been about to say "Oh, no — there will be other birthdays" but he's an honest man.*) You might find a length of diamond willow — carve him a cane — varnish it. . . .

KEITH: He's got *six* canes.

110 DOCTOR: Oh — well — a tie rack.

KEITH (*His chin in his hands — he simply turns his head slowly to the DOCTOR — holds it — then slowly turns it away*): Hell of a present.

DOCTOR: Yeah — guess it was.

115 KEITH: Hasn't worn a tie all his life. See what I mean — it ought to be something he'd get some fun out of! He'll get fun outa your box of cigars! Hey — maybe I could chip in my two dollars and twenty cents . . . .

DOCTOR: No. That wouldn't be giving him a present at all. . . .

KEITH: He still gets a bang out of us goin' fishin'. . . .

DOCTOR: All right. Tackle box.

120 KEITH: Already got one. (*He gets up.*) Only kind of fishin' stuff I could make would be a minnow net out of hay wire an' a onion sack. . . .

HELEN (*She has come to the door*): Doctor . . . (*To KEITH*) Why didn't you tell me the Doctor had come?

125 DOCTOR: Oh — Keith and I had something to talk about. . . . How's Daddy today?

W.O. Mitchell  
Contemporary Canadian writer



IV. Questions 30 to 38 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the magazine article “Suntans Can Kill You.”

from SUNTANS CAN KILL YOU

Every year at this time, millions of North Americans look forward to basking on the beach. Because they've heard that too much sun can cause skin cancer, they take a few precautions. Many use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 — except on cloudy days, of course. Others wear a hat and, as soon as they've had enough sun, they get into the shade. This way, they think, they'll get a *safe* tan.

10

There's only one problem. The latest research shows there's no such thing. Because of sun exposure, hundreds of thousands of people on this continent will be stricken with skin cancer this year, and more than 8000 will die. Others will damage their eyes or their skin. Still others may harm their immune systems, thus becoming more vulnerable to infections and disease.

20

Sun exposure, it turns out, is far more dangerous than even the experts supposed. “People know it's bad for them,” says Dr. Perry Robins, founder and president of the U.S. Skin Cancer Foundation, “but they're only now beginning to know *how* bad.”

30

Exposing our bodies to the sun is one of the riskiest things we do. Medical experts agree that ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun are the chief cause of skin cancer, which accounts for nearly one third of all cancer in this country.

40

There has been a dramatic increase in cases of the three main types of skin cancer — malignant melanoma, squamous-cell

carcinoma and basal-cell carcinoma — an increase that has taken researchers by surprise.

50 Sounding the alarm late last year, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) published results of a meticulous research study tracking the incidence of skin cancer in more than 300,000 people in the western United States. The results were striking. Over a period of 27 years, the number of cases of squamous-cell carcinoma — the most dangerous of common skin cancers — had increased 260 percent in men and 310 percent in women. The medical researchers laid the blame for this astounding increase directly on “increased voluntary exposure to the sun.”

60

The study also revealed that the incidence of malignant melanoma of the skin — the deadliest of skin cancers — increased 350 percent in men and 460 percent in women during that same period. Malignant melanoma is so dangerous that one fifth of its victims die within five years of diagnosis.

70

And the message didn't stop there. In the same issue of the JAMA, an editorial warned that “the recent increase in squamous-cell carcinoma incidence is most likely due to changes in life-style that have increased sun exposure.” It recommended that physicians tell patients to “avoid sunbathing, which we now recognize as a hazardous activity.”

80

90

The American Academy of Dermatology agrees. During its

*Continued*

1988 Consensus Conference on Photoaging/Photodamage, 18 of the world's leading medical experts on skin diseases were asked the question, "Is there a safe way to tan?"

100 Their answer was straightforward: "No."

That's it. The scientists who know more about human skin than anyone else confirm that all suntanning is dangerous — no exceptions.

110 **Lasting Scars.** The idea that a suntan was "healthy" started in the 1930s, and soon almost everyone believed a bronzed body was a symbol of fitness and vigour. How mistaken that was! A suntan is not a sign of health. It is a crude defence mechanism: your body's desperate — and always unsuccessful — attempt to protect you from damage that can be irreparable. Your system throws a dark curtain of pigment called melanin over  
120 you to keep dangerous UV radiation from doing even more harm. But it is too late. Once a suntan appears, the damage has already taken place.

Your chances of getting skin cancer depend in part on your skin type. Medical researchers have divided us into categories ranging from Types I and II —  
130 those at very high risk — to low-risk Type VI. Types I and II usually have blue, green or hazel eyes, and red or blond hair and freckles. Type I never tans, and Type II tans minimally. Those who have dark skin, including most blacks, are Type V or VI. These two types tan profusely and rarely burn.

140 **Exposure Consequences.** Unfortunately, even those at lower risk are *not* immune to skin cancer or other ravages of the sun. The potential dangers include:

*Premature aging.* Until recently everyone believed that, as we age, our skin inevitably wrinkles and sags. Now we know  
150 that most of the damage is done by years of exposure to ultraviolet rays, which destroy the elastic fibres that keep healthy skin taut and supple. The tens of millions of women who have pursued that "fresh, young-looking" golden tan are discovering that years of sunbathing have left them with yellowed, sagging skin.

160 *Eye damage.* Over the years, the constant bombardment of ultraviolet rays can turn the eye's clear lens brownish, like a piece of cellophane exposed in a window. Eventually, cataracts and partial blindness may result.

A particular danger to the eyes exists in tanning parlours, whose lamps emit large doses of dangerous UV light. According to  
170 the American Medical Association and the Canadian Ophthalmological Society, simply closing the eyes, using regular sunglasses or putting cotton balls over the eyes may not protect against eye damage.

Many medical experts mince no words in their opinion of tanning parlours. Dr. Michael J. Franzblau, clinical associate professor of dermatology at the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine, says, "No sane person should ever go into one."

*Crippled immune system.* One of the most frightening consequences of sun exposure is the effect it may have on the body's immune system. Doctors  
190 have long known that suntanning causes outbreaks of herpes sores on the lips of susceptible people. Since the herpes virus is always latent in these patients' bodies, scientists think ultraviolet radiation may

*Continued*



200 suppress the natural defence mechanisms.  
In an Australian study, volunteers were given a dozen 30-minute treatments with solarium lamps, and then had their blood cells tested for the ability to ward off malignant melanoma. Their "natural killer" cells had decreased in number and lost much of their disease-fighting capacity, even a week after exposure to UV radiation stopped.

#### Simple Precautions.

Fortunately, there are some steps that you can take to protect yourself from the sun's rays.

220 1. *Use a high SPF sunscreen.* The best sunscreens are "broad spectrum" — meaning they block out most of the UV radiation in sunlight, including both ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B. In the past, only ultraviolet B was considered dangerous, but there is mounting evidence that ultraviolet A is also harmful. In recent years, broad-spectrum sunscreens have been introduced in Europe and  
230 Australia, and they are now available in North America.

2. *Shield your eyes.* Whenever you go out, wear UV-blocking plastic sunglasses or coated prescription lenses that also provide protection. Sunglasses also help shield the area around your eyes.

240 3. *Wear protective clothing.* A tightly woven cotton shirt will screen out most ultraviolet radiation. The

tighter the weave, the greater the protection. Avoid loosely woven polyesters, which let a lot of UV rays through.

250 Be sure to wear a hat. A baseball cap can keep half the dangerous rays away from the eyes, but a broad-brimmed hat is even better. In Australia, where the increase in skin cancer is most dramatic, people say, "Slip, slop, slap!" It translates to: "Before you go out, slip on a shirt, slop on the sunscreen, and slap on a hat!"

260 4. *Be alert to skin changes.* If you notice any, see your doctor immediately. Although skin cancer is the most common malignancy, it is also the most curable — if caught in time. Fewer than two percent of people with squamous- or basal-cell cancer die of the disease. Malignant melanoma is more serious, so keep a keen watch on any dark moles.

270 5. *Don't forget your children.* Protect them by following the four steps outlined above. Kids absorb a large proportion of their lifetime UV exposure before age 18. And those who suffer several severe sunburns in childhood appear to be more likely to develop malignant melanomas later in life.

280 People who tan now pay later. And the price they pay may be high: skin cancer, ugly aged skin, impaired vision and a damaged immune system.

David Reuben  
Contemporary American writer  
and medical doctor

- V. After reading the magazine article "Suntans Can Kill You," Robin writes to her cousin, Jackie. Read the first draft of Robin's letter, carefully noting her revisions, and answer questions 39 to 45 in your Questions Booklet.

23 Nalwen Avenue  
Nalwen, Alberta  
T5J 2T4

June 10, 1992

Dear Jackie,

### Paragraph 1

<sup>just</sup>  
I got your last letter in the mail. Are you ever lucky <sup>to be going on</sup> ~~to be going on~~ <sup>A</sup>  
trip to Hawaii with your friend and her parents that must seem like a  
dream come true. You <sup>wrote</sup> ~~said~~ that you were going to prepare for your time  
on the beach by visiting your local tanning parlor and getting a <sup>"</sup>head  
start <sup>"</sup> on your tan. I recently read a magazine article that <sup>warns</sup> ~~says that~~  
<sup>people about tanning parlors. I hope that</sup> ~~isn't such a good idea. Maybe after I tell you about it you'll think~~  
<sup>avoid</sup> ~~twice about~~ going to a tanning parlor and <sup>be careful while you're</sup> ~~even about~~ lounging on the  
beach ~~while you're~~ in Hawaii.!

### Paragraph 2

You know, I ~~kind of~~ thought that sunbathing had always been popular, <sup>but</sup>  
<sup>N</sup> ~~not~~ so! It became popular in the 1930s. <sup>People</sup> ~~They~~ thought <sup>they were</sup> ~~a person was~~  
healthy if they were tanned. As the article ~~it~~ stated, we are now aware  
that tanning is actually one of the <sup>body's</sup> ~~bodies~~ defence mechanisms.

*Continued*



### Paragraph 3

Scientists many important

~~They learned a whole bunch of facts~~ from a study that was done over

27 thousands The study  
~~many years and involved lots of people.~~ They showed an unbelievable  
increase in skin cancers and that more women than men were affected.

### Paragraph 4

that there are T  
The scientists say ~~they're~~ six basic skin types, and type I includes very  
like yours by the sun T  
fair skin, and is the most affected, and type VI includes dark skin and is

However,  
the least affected, but all skin types are affected to some degree. And

T of the our  
~~The scientists put the most blame for this growing problem on the way~~  
changed life-styles. T are critical of  
~~our life-styles have changed and they~~ particularly dislike suntanning

parlors because the lamps release large doses of ultraviolet light.

They say that "no sane person should ever go into one."

### Paragraph 5

should you  
So what are ~~people~~ to do? Well, the experts suggest that wearing

proper clothing, using good sunglasses, applying powerful sunscreen lotions, and wearing  
broad-brimmed hats can help protect us from the sun's rays. Enjoy

Hawaii, but  
and remember to take good care of your skin!

Love,

Robin

VI. Questions 46 to 55 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the novel *About My Father's Business*.

from ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS

The ferry took us close to a liner moored in mid river waiting for tugs and tide. With mounting excitement Father and I spelled out her name to each other — 'R E G I N A'. It was the very liner on which, only months earlier, Father's brother, my Uncle Wallace and his wife, Jinny, had returned to Canada after spending a holiday with us. I had been allowed to go with my parents to see them off and never before had I waved goodbye with so much enthusiasm. They had stayed with us for three weeks and during that time Mother, who was aware that Father's family considered themselves a cut above her, had been determined to impress them with our gentility. The best cutlery had been used at every meal; the Dutch oven on which the breakfast bacon was usually cooked in front of the kitchen fire was banished to the shed and the breakfast cooked in a frying pan on the gas stove; a new pegged rug, made by Mother the previous winter but stored under a bed until now, was spread on the floor and white linen druggeting<sup>1</sup> was laid over the shabby staircarpet. For me, life had been as restricted as if I had been wearing a harness. Unsuitable playmates — virtually everyone I knew — had been forbidden the vicinity of the house. I had been compelled to wear my best clothes every day and frowned and threatened into being on my best behaviour every waking minute. At teatime I had been required to eat thin bread and butter instead of the thick bread and dripping<sup>2</sup> I found so much tastier and when from time to time I had been on the point of betraying that this was not my normal fare, Mother's glare had been almost enough to make me lose my appetite. At night I had been sent to bed an hour earlier than my usual time and sternly discouraged from singing myself to sleep. Every morning I had been warned that I must attend to the calls of nature as soon as the desire manifested itself because, it was explained, with strangers in the house, to delay until the need became frantically urgent and then go flinging myself at the lavatory door demanding the immediate vacation of the occupant, or else, might lead to shameful consequences. After the first few days of Uncle Wallace's visit I began discreetly quizzing as to when he was going back to Canada, and when the happy day came, after I'd remembered my manners and hoped they had enjoyed their stay, I had sung all the way to the ship. There was a brass band playing on the landing stage, the lines of bunting<sup>3</sup> dancing in the breeze and the general festive air of the crowd of well-wishers had reflected my own mood of elation at the departure of our guests.

I think my parents too had been glad to see them go. The incompatibility had become apparent as soon as Mother discovered that Aunt Jinny used face powder and wore thin, sleeveless silk nightdresses and lacy underwear. She not only wore such garments but exhibited them on the high clothes line normally reserved for sheets and tablecloths. Mother considered a nightdress should be a

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>druggeting — a heavy fabric floor covering

<sup>2</sup>dripping — fat and juices drawn from meat during cooking

<sup>3</sup>bunting — long, colored strips of cloth used for festive decoration



40 thoroughly opaque tent of white flannelette or cambric with perhaps a decorative  
needlework frill at neck and wrists, and even these, along with fleecy bloomers  
and stays, were hung on a discreetly low line after the milkman had made his  
morning delivery. They were always taken in again, dry or not, before the milkman  
45 Jinny's apparel might have on the milkman. I thought she was afraid he might  
start watering down the milk.

The dissimilarity in outlook became even more apparent when Uncle Wallace  
and Aunt Jinny had attended with Mother a function advertised as a 'Whist Drive  
and Dance'. Mother loved whist drives but both she and Father denounced dancing,  
50 so she was always careful to leave as soon as the whist playing was finished. To  
Mother's mortification, however, Uncle Wallace and his wife had taken it for  
granted that they would stay for the dancing and stay they did, enjoying themselves  
hugely until the dance ended at five minutes to midnight, an unprecedented hour  
for Mother, who had felt constrained to remain as chaperon to her guests. Father,  
55 who didn't approve of whist drives when they were held in a hall used for dancing,  
took the attitude that Mother had only herself to blame for taking them, which  
made Mother even more embittered. She went around with her thin lips as down-  
curved as a bucket handle for at least a week afterwards.

60 There had been a good deal of head-shaking after the final departure of Uncle  
Wallace and Aunt Jinny.

"If that's what Canada does for people I don't want to go there," said Father.

"I don't suppose we'll ever be invited," replied Mother. She was right. We  
never heard from them again.

*Lillian Beckwith*  
Contemporary British author

**VII. Questions 56 to 65 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the story "The Curlew's Cry."**

**from THE CURLEW'S CRY**

When she got back to her downtown Calgary apartment Mr. S. Sikirski was waiting at her door. He was a very tall man with grey hair and a heavy grey moustache. In his left hand he was holding a worn leather briefcase. He stood there, very stiff and straight.

5        "I am very sorry to inconvenience you, Miss, Miss . . ."  
      "Laidlaw. Sheila Laidlaw."

He inclined his head slightly towards her. "I have been very foolish, I forgot my key. I have locked myself out."

"Is the caretaker not in?"

10       Mr. S. Sikirski shook his grey head. "I wonder if I could use your balcony. I could climb over. There is only three feet separating my balcony from yours."

Sheila eyed him dubiously, expecting for some reason to see a muscle twitch on his face, or to see his hands shaking. He stood, unmoving, his eyes fixed on hers. Sheila unlocked her door. "You'd better come in." She threw her jacket  
15       and purse onto the couch and opened the French windows. "Be careful, it's twelve stories down. You'd better leave your briefcase here. I'll hand it over to you."

For an old man Sikirski was surprisingly agile. He braced himself with his right hand on the rail, and gripping the upper part of the window frame with his left hand, he pulled himself up. He teetered there for a moment, steadied himself,  
20       and then leapt over the three-foot gap, landing without a stumble on his own balcony. There was a glimmer of a smile on his lips when he turned around to face Sheila.

She smiled back at him. "Bravo." She handed him his briefcase.

He inclined his head again. "Thank you. You are very kind." He was about  
25       to go inside when he suddenly hesitated and turned around. "Miss Laidlaw, would you care to have a glass of wine with me and perhaps listen to some of my records?"

She was about to say no, but something about his stance checked her. It was as though he was standing in front of a firing squad, as though he had just refused  
30       the blindfold. Death or life. Yes or no. It is all the same to me, his pose seemed to suggest. She smiled again at S. Sikirski. "I'd like that very much," she said.

Mr. Sikirski's apartment, Sheila noted ruefully, was much neater than hers, but there was an unfinished quality about it, as if something was missing. In one corner stood a tall varnished bookcase lined with thick leather bound volumes with  
35       gold lettering on the spines. In the alcove opposite was a cabinet full of record albums, all neatly arranged. The cream-coloured walls were bare except for a simple wooden crucifix above a table with a solitary framed photograph on it. Mr. Sikirski showed Sheila to a chair and then went into his kitchen and poured out two glasses of red wine. He handed one glass to Sheila and then placed his  
40       briefcase on the table and carefully took from it several records.

*Continued*

He glanced at her. "I go to the library once a week. They have an excellent classical section." He took one of the records from its jacket and placed it on the turntable of his stereo and clicked the switch on. He took his glass of wine and sat across from Sheila. It was a piano solo that was playing. Sheila had to  
45 strain her ears to hear. The rippling notes sounded remote, almost as though they came from some other unseen place, imperceptibly rising and falling, then converging and moving away beyond earshot.

"It's very beautiful," said Sheila.

"Paderewski.<sup>1</sup> He was my mentor." Mr. Sikirski sat very still, his head tilted  
50 to one side, his long fingers encircling his wine glass. As he spoke he did not look at Sheila. His gaze was fixed on some point over her shoulder.

He spoke quietly, distantly, like the music that was playing. He spoke as though there was no need for preliminaries, as if they had made a pact to dispense with small talk. "Before the war I taught private piano lessons. I taught in Lublin  
55 and Warsaw. I also taught here until I retired. I was never as great as Paderewski. I knew at an early age I would never be great, but I was a good teacher. That is how I met my wife. She was one of my pupils. She gave a performance in Wawel Cathedral quite recently."

"Oh, I didn't realize. I didn't . . ."

"You thought I was perhaps a widower or a bachelor. No, we have been  
60 married for many years. I am waiting for her and my son." He made a motion with his left hand. "That is her photograph on the table. Her name is Maria and my son's name is Stefan."

Sheila looked at the picture. She was a young, fair-haired woman standing  
65 on a snow-covered clearing in a pine forest. Beside her was a small, fair-haired boy who was holding onto his mother's sleeve. Both their heads were turned slightly away from the camera, their smiles strained, as though they were peering into the sun.

"They will be here soon," Mr. Sikirski repeated. "Very soon. I have it on  
70 the best of authority."

"You must be very happy," said Sheila. She was looking at the photograph again. Only then did she notice that the woman wore the kind of high shouldered coat her mother used to wear during the war. The boy wore a sailor hat with a black band around it. She could guess that there would be white lettering on the  
75 hat denoting the name of a ship.

"Yes, I am very happy," said Mr. Sikirski, touching his wine glass to his lips.

It was getting dark now and the room was in half shadow. Sheila could barely make out his features. She couldn't take her eyes off the picture. A dying ray of  
80 sunshine touched it momentarily, illuminating the woman's fair hair, creating an aureole around her head; then the light was gone. She sensed that Mr. Sikirski was following her gaze. He answered the question that she could not ask.

"It has been forty-five years since we have met. I had to leave. There was no choice. Forty-five years, but they will be here soon. There is no doubt in my  
85 mind about that. It is a question of faith."

*Continued*

<sup>1</sup>Paderewski — a famous Polish concert pianist



Sheila felt her hands suddenly trembling. She placed her glass on the floor and tried to light a cigarette, but she couldn't hold the match steady. She felt cold. Mr. Sikirski had just said something else but she hadn't heard. He was leaning forward slightly, one hand held palm upwards towards her. She did not  
90 need to see the expression on his face. She knew well enough what was there. She knew what she had to say.

"I'm sure they'll be here soon. I'd like to meet them when they arrive."

His voice was lowered to a whisper, but it was firm and assured again, merging with the music in the background. "Thank you. I knew you would  
95 understand." The chair creaked as he sat back.

He was asleep when Sheila finally left, his head slumped to one side. She took the glass from his hand and put it on the table beside the photograph of Maria and Stefan. As she passed him she touched his shoulder but he didn't stir.

*J. Leslie Bell*  
Contemporary Canadian writer

VIII. Questions 66 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

THE RELEASE

All day he shoves the pasteboard in  
The slick machine that turns out boxes,  
A box a minute; and its din  
Is all his music, as he stands  
5 And feeds it; while his jaded brain  
Moves only out and in again  
With the slick motion of his hands,  
Monotonously making boxes,  
A box a minute — all his thoughts  
10 A slick succession of empty boxes.

But, when night comes, and he is free  
To play his fiddle, with the music  
His whole soul moves to melody;  
No more recalling day's dumb<sup>1</sup> round,  
15 His reckless spirit sweeps and whirls  
On surging waves and dizzy swirls  
And eddies of enchanted sound;  
And in a flame-winged flight of music  
Above the roofs and chimneys soars  
20 To ride the starry tides of music.

*W.W. Gibson*

British poet and playwright  
(1878-1962)

<sup>1</sup>dumb — mindless



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